1:Vaillant A-5 (1928-1936)1941 NU7 Aztec NU7

surrounding our own property concepts was unnecessary. There was little to harass the individual intellectually or economically. Existence was subject to divine favor, and a man fared much as did his fellows. Large as some towns were—Mexico City had three hundred thousand people—the sense of community was strong. Freedom of thought, individual liberty, personal fortunes, were nonexistent, but people lived according to a code that had worked well and continuously for centuries. An Aztec would have been horrified at the naked isolation of an individual's life in our Western world.

1:Vaillant A-5 (1928-1936)1941 NU7 Aztec NU7

CHAPTER VII

ECONOMY

The Domestic and Tribal Economy of the Aztec People

THE AZTEC SOCIAL SYSTEM provided a means by which people could exist harmoniously together in considerable numbers. The domestic and tribal economy of the Aztecs offered the food, shelter, tools and clothing to which man largely owes his dominant position on earth. The measure of a human society may be gauged by the relationship between the organization of the people themselves and their use of materials to build houses and equip them. The Aztecs' economy had the same basic simplicity as had their social organization; likewise it had the same flexibility in expanding to meet the needs of a growing population.[1]

Agriculture was the basis of Aztec life, and corn, *zea mays*, was the chief food plant. The cultivation of plants ensured a food supply near at hand, which was not subject to the fluctuations of game and thereby enabled man to take thought for the morrow. The clan system, as we have seen, recognized that the fruits of the land supported the tribe. Therefore, it was only natural that the tribe should own and control the land which supported its members.[2] (See Plate 38.)

The tribal council divided the land among the clans, and

1:Vaillant A-5 (1928-1936)1941 NU7 Aztec NU7

burdened down with gold, drowned ignominiously in the canals. Diaz, however, noted Indian usage and confined himself to four jades which he was able to exchange later and which, in his words, "served me well in healing my wounds and gathering me food."[10]

The Aztecs did not have our modern esteem for gold, so the Spaniards had great difficulty in getting it at first. The Mexican Indians responded to the invaders' demands for objects of value by offering jade and turquoise, those substances most precious to themselves. Such misguided compliance was highly irritating to Cortes and his men, who had no ethnological training; nor, it is only fair to say, would they have wanted such education, were it available. Gold was valuable to the Aztecs only for the ornaments which could be made from it, and silver may have had an even greater value, since nodules were rare and the Indians had no technique for smelting the ore.[11] (See Plates 46–47.)

Thus the Aztecs did not hold our ideas of value and wealth. Yet they contributed much to our prosperity and well-being, partly through being forced as slaves to work the gold and silver mines, whose modern economic significance they so little understood, and even more through the enrichment of the world's supply of foods. In addition to corn of several varieties, the Aztecs developed many sorts of beans, a very nutritive addition to human diet because of the high protein content. Squash, gourds, *chia*, *camotes*, green and red peppers, alligator pears and tomatoes were products of the versatile Middle American farmer, enriching the Aztec diet and that of the modern world. Trade with southern Vera Cruz brought chocolate, vanilla and pineapples to the Aztec larder.[12]

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CHAPTER VIII

CRAFTSMANSHIP

A consideration of how the Aztecs attained a high degree of skillful craftsmanship with relatively few mechanical aids

CRAFTSMANSHIP allows an exercise of the creative impulse, 181
satisfying the individual through his domination of the raw material. In our modern mechanized age most of us suffer from the lack of opportunity to create, since almost everything we use comes machine-made, and not even the skilled mechanic feels that his ingenuity and craftsmanship alone have produced a useful and attractive object. The ordinary modern floats like Mohammed's coffin, without contact with the earth on which he lives or the universe of which he is an infinitesimal part. The Aztec, however, lived in the most intimate contact with nature in its finite and infinite manifestations. Because his conscious being was set in terms of the group mind, he seldom felt that sensation, common to the Western intellect, of having cut himself from the tree of natural existence with the saw of his own reason.

The home production of articles for daily use gave an 556
impetus to craftsmanship, since wealth and prosperity lay 555
in a man's possessions, not in the abstract ownership of rights to the work of others. Thus a successful man had a well-made house, finely fashioned and decorative clothing, care-

1:Vaillant A-5 (1928-1936)1941 NU7 Aztec NU7

elaborated and specialized groups. To turn such craftsmanship into art required a mere flick of the switch of social demand. The arts, as considered in the next chapters, were just projections of the craft background.

The measure of Aztec civilization cannot be gauged solely by its technical achievements. The arts and crafts transcend the products of Old World peoples at the same mechanical level. The spirit of the Aztec people, as exemplified in their religious art, soared to the lofty heights attained by the creators of all those ancient civilizations, like Egypt and Mesopotamia, whose monuments reflect the glory of their builders' religious devotion.

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The lag between the calendric and the solar year, for which we compensate by adding a day every four years as the twenty-ninth of February, was difficult to adjust by Aztec standards since so much of the time count hinged on the orderly mathematical sequence of days. Some authorities believe that the Aztecs let the calendar drop behind, others that compensation was made during the unlucky period of five days. A third suggestion interprets the celebration of a feast held every eight years as a sign that a dateless day was introduced, unrecognized in the *tonalpohualli* of the year but honored with special rites.[1] (See Plate 58, middle.)

However the matter of the leap year was settled, the close of one cycle and the beginning of a new one was celebrated with great pomp each year Two Reed chosen as the first day of each cycle for some ritualistic reason. In the Mixteca-Puebla area the *tonalamatls* show evidence that the priests observed the planet Venus and took note of a Venus Year of 584 days. At the end of two cycles (104 years) there was a tremendous ceremony of great ritualistic significance, for at the same time as the beginning of a Venus count, a solar count, a fifty-two-year cycle, and a *tonalpohualli* all coincided. That four mystical rhythms, affecting such diverse aspects of the universe and the gods that dwelt therein, could meet must have produced great satisfaction and occasioned the utmost rejoicing among people for whom pattern and form had such great significance.[2]

Although the Valley of Mexico Aztecs did not use the Venus count they celebrated the cyclical change with the utmost ceremony. They thought of the change from one cycle to another as the death of one life and the beginning of a new one. The realization that nature could withhold the

8: Barlow E-4 (no date) N949 NU7 Aztec NU7

635 We know from a list of towns in this province which paid tribute
103 to Texcoco that the following towns, in addition to those given in the *Matricula,* were likewise pre-Hispanic subjects: Atlpoyecan (8), Maçatepec (10), Tlaquiltenanco (13), and Cacatepec (12).

REMARKS ON TOWNS

632 *Atlpoyecan* is clearly Alpuyeca.

Amacoztitla is almost surely the modern Amacuzac. A parallel truncation has occurred in the name Acamilyxtlahuacan (Acamixtla) in adjacent Tlachco Province.

Chimalco, the *Mendocino* version, is corrected to read "Panchimalco," since the glyph clearly shows a banner (*pantli*) and a shield (*chimalli*); the *Matricula* also bears the correct annotation. Moreover, there exists a town of Panchimalco today, and none called Chimalco.

Molotla is said, in a mid-sixteenth-century source,[8] to be a subject of Xiuhtepec.

[712] *Quauhnahuac.* That Quauhnahuac was the big Mexican garrison of the region is evident from Bernal Díaz, who speaks of it as "muy mejor y mayor" than Yauhtepec.[9] After its surrender the caciques asked his pardon for not having given in earlier, because the Mexicans had ordered resistance and augmented their garrison.[10]

NATURE OF THE PROVINCE

101 *Inhabitants and languages.*—Of the inhabitants, to whom the name
197 Tlalhuica is applied, Sahagún writes: "These tlalhuica are those who are settled in the hot country, and they are náhuas, of Mexican speech; in their land much cotton is produced, and aji, and all other foodstuffs."[11]

● 181 He goes on to say that Tlalhuicatl means "incapable, unable"—a typical bit of native arrogance—and that their defects are that "they go around too much dressed-up, and carrying flowers in their hands"

[8] *Códices indígenas* (1933), Codices 12 and 13.

[9] "Avia dentro en el mucha gente de guerra, ansi de mexicanos como de los naturales" (*Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* [1904], II: 40).

[10] "[El] Señor de Mexico les enbio a mandar que pues estavan en fortaleza que desde alli nos diesen guerra e que les enbio vn buen esquadron de mexicanos para que les ayudasen" (*ibid.,* p. 41).

[11] *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* (1938), III: 132.

8: Barlow E-4 (no date)1949 NU7 Aztec NU7

and are "muy tímidos y toscos o torpes." This seems to have been a general opinion.[12] Quauhnahuac was their principal town, from which they spread south and into what later became Huaxtepec Province.[13]

Provincial borders in 1519.—The province of Quauhnahuac was surrounded by other provinces of the Empire. The intricate provinces of the Valley of Mexico lay to the north. Eastward were Chalco and Huaxtepec, and in the south Tlalcoçauhtitlan. Tepequacuilco, Tlachco, and Malinalco formed the western borders, from south to north.

Quauhnahuac itself was subject to Texcoco specifically. There was a special room in the palace at Texcoco for storing the tribute of this southern province[14] and even a detailed list of what Texcoco received.

Regional names.—The region is called Tlalhuic, by one source, at least.[15]

TRIBUTE

Tribute of the whole province.—The following goods were exacted from the Cuernavaca region:

CLOTHING

1,200 bundles of large "twisted" mantles**
800 bundles of little white mantles**
1,200 bundles of little mantles "richly worked, the sort the lords and caciques wore"**
400 bundles of loincloths**
400 bundles of women's skirts and blouses**
8 warriors' costumes with shields**[16]

[12] Códice Ramírez, fol. 20: "los tlalhuicas que era la gente mas tosca destos seis tribus ... ."

[13] Durán, *Historia de las indias de Nueva España* (1867–1880), I: 12: "llegaron los Tlaluiccas [*sic*] ... los quales como allaron ocupado lo demas, asentaron en lugar que agora poseen, tomando por prencipal asiento y cabeça de su provincia, á Cuauhnauac, de donde salieron los Señores de aquella congregacion á hacer sus moradas y asientos como los demas, unos á Yahutepec, otros á Oaxtepec, á Acapichtlan, á Tlaquiltenanco con todos los demas pueblos, villas y estancias que llamamos Marquesado, pues es el del felicísimo Marqués del Valle."

[14] Ixtlilxochitl, *Obras históricas* (1892), II: 180. A plan of the Texcoco palace and its storerooms figures in the *Códice Quinatzin*.

[15] Códice Ramírez, fol. 20: "llamaron estos a su provincia Tlalhuic porque la poblaron los Tlalhuica."

[16] Among these was the "Huaxtec" (Cuextecatl) dress with its peaked cap so typical of the statuary and divinities of that region. In the *Matricula* it is clearly marked "cetecpantli cuextecatl toztli," "one yellow Huaxtec costume"—which confirms Seler's identification of the style from literary sources alone. He says, "Ich kein Bild kenne, das durch eine Beischrift als cuextecatl Devise gekennzeichnet wäre" (Seler, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur Amerikanischen Sprach- und Alterthumskunde* [1902–1923], II: 609–610).

14:Bandelier E-4 (no date)1880 NU7 Aztec NU7

might occasionally have raised, as well as upon the chase. But during this very period also, their chief divinity and subsequent principal idol, Huitzilopochtli, god of war, is reported to have uttered these prophetic words: "And I was sent on this journey, and "my office it is to carry arms, bows, arrows, and shields; war is my "chief duty, and the object of my coming. I have to look out in "all directions, and with my body, head and arms, have to do my "duty in many tribes, being on the borders and lying in wait for "many nations, to maintain and to gather them, although not graciously." Proceeding to state a number of objects, *subsequently* given to the Mexicans in tribute, he closes as follows: "All this I "shall own and hold, for I am sent after it, it being my office, and "I came for this purpose."[4] Imbued with a spirit of which this utterance is merely a legendary form, the Mexicans made their appearance among the agricultural tribes of the valley of Mexico as a crowd of famished, but desperate, intruders, were received as such, and, after a brave resistance, compelled to take refuge in a naturally isolated spot of dry land, surrounded by swamps and marshes.[5]

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In this defensive position, which the Mexicans subsequently converted into the strongest one ever occupied by Indians up to the 16th century,[6] they carefully nursed and developed their war-

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[4] Tezozomoc (Cap. I, p. 6). Joseph de Acosta (Historia natural y moral de las Indias, 1608. Lib. VII, chap. IV, p. 450). M. Brasseur de Bourbourg ("Popol-vuh, "Intr., p. 137 and p. 140.") intimates Huitzilopochtli to be a myth common to all the aborigines of Central America in general.

[5] The spot to which the Mexicans fled, and which subsequently became the nucleus of Tenuchtitlan, and of Tlatilulco, was *dry land*, in the midst of canes and reeds. (Tezozomoc, cap. I, p. 8, "porque el dia que llegaron a esta laguna Mexicana, en medio "de ella estava, y tenia un sitio de tierra, y en el una peña.") Fray Géronimo de Mendieta (Historia ecclesiastica Indiana," published by my most esteemed friend, Señor J. G. Icazbalceta, the learned Mexican scholar, in 1870. Lib. II, cap. XXXIV, p. 148. "Y luego se hicièron fuertes en este sitio, tomando por muralla y cerca las aguas y "emboscadas de la juncia y carrizales y matorrales de que estaba entonces poblada y "llena toda la laguna, que no hallaron el agua descubièrta sino en sola una encrucijada "de agua limpia desocupada de los matorrales y carrizales, formada a' manera de una "aspa de San Andrés. Y casi al medio de la encrucijada hallaron un peñasco"). Torquemada (Lib. II, cap. X, pp. 91 and 92. "En este lugar se ranchearon (como decimos "en el libro de los Poblaciones) haciendo unas pobres, y pequeñas choças, rodeados "de carriço, y Espadañas, que ellos llaman Xacalli," etc., etc. (Acosta, Lib. VII, cap. VII, p. 465. " . . . . y dividiendóse una parte y otra, por toda aquella espessura "de espadañas, y carrizales, y juncia de la laguna, commençaron á buscar por las señas "de la revelacion el lugar tan deseado.")

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[6] There was, to my knowledge, but one similar position: that of Atitlan, in Guatemala. (See: Segunda Relacion por Pedro de Alvarado á Hernando Cortes, 28 July, 1524, pp. 460, 461 and 462, of Vol. I, of "Historiadores primitivos de Indias," by Don Enrique de Vedia, Madrid, 1851.) The tribe was regarded as very fierce, also.

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14:Bandelier E-4 (no date) 1880 NU7 Aztec NU7

like customs and propensities. *War*, at first *defensive*, afterwards *offensive*, became the *life of the tribe*. Religion demanded it for its bloody rites; revenge, so deeply rooted in Indian nature, called for it at every moment. But especially was it required for the *subsistence* of the tribe, whose increasing numbers could not live from agriculture on the scanty soil allotted to them, and who, therefore, were compelled to depend upon the spoils gathered from inroads upon their neighbours. *If there was no war in progress, the Mexicans deemed themselves "idle."*[7] We may therefore presume that the military organization of the Mexicans, their preparations for warfare, and the mode of the latter, are features of importance, and worthy of serious attention.

Every male of the Mexican tribe was born a warrior. When still a babe his father placed alongside of the child a small bow[8] and some arrows, in token of its future duties. There was no military caste at Tenuchtitlan or Mexico; with the exception of children, old people, infirm or crippled persons, and sometimes priests, every one had to go to war. Boys fifteen years old were taken along, and in some instances it was even directed "that no "youth over fifteen years of age should remain; that all had to "go, except children and old people."[9] Thus there was no "standing army" the available force being composed of all the able-bodied men of the tribe of Mexico.[10]

[7] Tezozomoc (Cap. XXI, p. 32). "Pasados algunos años dijo el rey Moctezuma á "Zihuacoatl Tlacaeleltzin general y oydor: pareceme que ha muchos dias que estamos "muy *ociosos*." This term, "idle," applies to the lack of any war, since immediately thereafter the war against Chalco was kindled by the most wanton provocation on the part of the Mexicans.

[8] Fr. X. Clavigero (Storia del Messico. Cesena, 1780. Lib. VI, cap. XXXVI). Francisco Lopez de Gomara ("Historia general de las Indias." Second part, "Conquista "de Méjico." contained in the collection of Vedia, volume I,—"This done, they put in "the right hand of the child, an arrow if a boy, a shuttle if a girl, to mark that he would "have to improve by the use of arms, and she by spinning and weaving," p. 438, Vedia, I). Torquemada (Lib. XIII, cap. XX, p. 490, of Vol. II, says this was done four days after the birth of the child). Clavigero intimates that only those children "whose fathers were warriors," received the token, but this is not at all confirmed. Motolinia ("Historia de los Indios de la Nueva-España" in "Coleccion de Documentos para la "Historia de Mexico," by Señor Icazbalceta, Mexico, 1866, volume I. "Y entonces si "era varon poniale una saeta en la mano, . . . el varon porque fuese valiente para "defender á si y á la patria, porque las guerras eran muy ordinarias cada año." Tratado I, cap. V, p. 37). There were no hereditary professions or trades, so to say.

[9] Tezozomoc (Cap. LXXXIV, p. 141, and cap. XC, p. 158). Acosta (Lib. IV, cap. XXVI, pp. 442 and 443).

[10] What the Germans call "*Allgemeine Wehrpflicht*," existed among the Mexicans on the most extensive scale. But their forces, although always ready, never went *permanently* outside of the pueblo, for they were not numerous enough, and did not gather

16:Bandelier E-4 (no date)1880 NU7 Aztec NU7

became, according to rules of kinship, one against the social group to which he belonged. This presupposes again a general division of crimes into two classes, one of which includes such as were committed by members of the kin against other members thereof or against institutions of the same group to which they belonged. The other comprises offenses committed by inhabitants of one calpulli against those of another. It is only the first class which we take under consideration here, the second we reserve for our discussion of the mode of government. Crimes committed within the kin can be classified as against persons, against property, and against medicine.

The aborigines of Mexico are generally represented as being, in their every-day's intercourse, of a quiet, peaceable, inoffensive disposition, contrasting strongly with their savage ferocity in warfare. This was not however due to any innate gentleness and mildness of nature, but only to the peculiar restraint enforced upon them by the law of retaliation or revenge.[121] Brawls resulting in bodily injury were therefore of extremely rare occurrence, and then it was left to the parties to settle it among themselves. In such cases, as in the event of mutual jealousy, a challenge often passed between them, and this challenge brought about an encounter at *the next campaign* when, while the warriors were engaged with the enemies of the tribe, the contestants fought as if they had belonged to opposite camps, until one of them

[121] The character of the Mexican Aborigines is variously depicted by older writers. It appears as a mixture of childlike docility and fierce passions. *Cortés* ("*Carta Segunda*," p. 18. Vedia, Vol. I), speaks of them according to the reports of the Tlaxcaltecans. *Bernal Diez* ("*Historia* etc.," pp. 309 and 310. Cap. CCVIII. Vedia II), specially dwells on their vices and their cruelty, as evidenced in their sacrifices. "*El Conquistador Anónimo*" (Col. de Docum., I, pp. 371, 383, 387, and 397), places great stress on their ferocity, although he also says that they are very obedient. The missionaries generally exalt their good sides—their docility and faithfulness. Compare *Motolinía* (Trat. I, cap. XIV, pp. 76 and 77). The same (Trat. I, cap. II, pp. 22 and 23), mentions, however, their vices also, attributing nearly all of them (idolatry excepted), to their inclination towards intemperance. (Trat. II, cap. IV, p. 113): "Lo que de esta generacion se puede decir es, que son muy extranos de nuestra condicion . . . ." *Zurita* (p. 197–207), is very bitter against such as treat the Indians as barbarians. (Id., 42 and 45). *Mendieta* (Lib. III, cap. XLIII, p. 200), says that they were very willing to forgive and ask to be forgiven, the latter taking place, before going to confess themselves, sometimes before all the relationship and the neighbors: "suelen algunos juntar (al tiempo que se quieren confesar) toda su parentela y vecinos con quien communican, y pedirles perdon en la manera dicha." Against this, it is reported by *Torquemada* (Lib. XIV, cap. I, p. 535), that "these people were naturally more vindictive, than all the rest of the world." Compare also the descriptions of the character of the Mexicans in *Clavigero* (Lib. I, cap. XV).